During the primary and junior high school years, no exacting demands are made at home. Young girls after school strap the baby on their back and go out to play, or they may fetch water from the well, pond, or faucet, carrying it home in buckets hanging from a pole resting on their shoulders, or they may help in preparing the evening meal. Younger boys, 12 and over, help with feeding the pigs or run errands, but they have more leisure than the girls. There is night study at home, including practice on the abacus and reading to which the parents listen, correcting the errors. Formal education, for a large majority, ends with the completion of junior high school.

As children grow older, they continue in off hours to help around the home, help which follows the lines of the male and female division of labor of adulthood. This is not a strict division, as there are many areas in which both sexes do common chores. In the agricultural villages, girls continue to help around the home, carry water, and hoe in the sweet potato patches. In the fishing village, they also carry water, help with the laundry, and start helping the older women in selling and distributing fish. The boys work more in the paddies. In the fishing village, they may make trips to the sea, but as a rule, this does not begin until later.

For those who go to senior high school, there is a noticeable change from the earlier school experience. They enter at about 14 or 15 and remain in high school 3 years. It is a period of growing maturity, and the older they get the shyer they seem to become. Girl's hair is allowed to grow longer, perhaps to neck or shoulder length, less often in long braids, and the bangs remain. A big change takes place in the hair styles of the boys. The close clipped haircut is abandoned and the hair is allowed to grow long. Often it is not cut at all on the top, so that in two or three years, it has acquired considerable length.

The child who leaves school at the end of primary or junior high school is more quickly absorbed in the daily work life and traditional occupations of the family. The senior high school student has teaching, clerking, translating, or other white collar work in mind. The boy who leaves school earlier might drive a truck or a horse cart, or adopt the occupation of his father. This is likely to be a time killing period for those young men who live in the fishing village or whose families lack land.

6

Early Adulthood and the Engagement

In early adulthood and before marriage, a son of the house might be given a separate room or a small outlying shed which he fixes up for himself. The young girls, more and more, assume full time duties in the home, relieving the mother. Often the mother and her young daughter work together in the fields. These mature young girls also may take over the care of younger children. Young men from 17 on are

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

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Introduction

The modern history of Okinawan education falls into three periods, which correspond with the cultural influences of three different nations: (1) the traditional education borrowed from China, (2) the Japanese system of education, and (3) the introduction of American concepts of education following the war.[1]

The Chinese influences ended in the latter part of the 19th century. Education was confined to the upper classes. "Aping China in everything, Lew Chew has also its three yearly examinations, which, for the time being, make quite a stir in the learned world, but hold out no prospect for high station, as in China. At most, the fortunate candidate gets, beside a good fill of honor, a rice pension or a schoolmastership."[2]

The new Japanese education also introduced western ideas into Okinawa through a Japanese sieve. The Meiji Rescript on Education (1890) codified the principles of this new pedagogy. It was a method of inducing conformity to the ideals of the new Japan. The most important point was that education became a mass program.[3] This new education, according to Chamberlain (1895), took hold gradually.

Before the war there were two policies in public education. Up to 1940, primary school (shōgakko) was an eight year course. In addition to the usual studies, the curriculum from grades one through six emphasized duties and obligations (gimu) to one's parents, relatives, friends, and to the emperor. The national school (kokumingakko) system, which lasted until the end of the war, replaced the old primary school. Instruction in duties and obligations extended over eight years with intensified emphasis on nationalism and emperor worship.

1 Education is a large, complex, and technical subject. Time did not permit spending a large amount of time in classrooms. My purpose here is to show how education is related to village and family life and to explain the general nature of the problems as I observed them.

2 Hawks, Perry's expedition to Japan, as cited, I, 223-24. The words are those of Dr. Bettelheim.

3 The modern school system in Japan dates from 1872. Many of the Okinawan schools seem to have been started in the eighties and nineties. The first school in Okinawa is said to have been started in Shuri in 1798.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

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Hanashiro the children take the short walk to primary and junior high school at Gushichan village; for senior high school they go to Chinen, 5 or 6 miles away. Most of them walk. Matsuda has an elementary school with the junior and senior high schools at Ginoza village, about 1 1/2 miles away. In senior high school, there is more specialization. The general science course is divided into physics (butsuri), chemistry (kagaku), and biology (seibutsu). Mathematics is split up into geometry (kika) and algebra (daitsu). There is further instruction in agriculture for the boys, some for the girls. The girls continue with domestic science, including sewing.

In the secondary schools, vocational education is well represented in the curriculum. The courses are planned as a preparation for the type of work students will do as adults in a village. The instructors seem competent although the subject matter does not include modern advances. There should not, in my opinion, be a further growth in vocational at the expense of general education, except after careful study of long term requirements. The great masses of people will continue to depend on agriculture, forestry, and to some extent on fishing for their existence, and vocational education should be built around a recognition of these facts. It should concentrate on supplying new knowledge related to these main fields.

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New technical skills that we desire to develop should be governed by these considerations: (1) the improvement of agriculture, forestry, and fishing. (2) The long range plans of the military and civil administration and the skills they will require. (3) New skills that will be needed with any development of foreign trade or of local industrialization.

Vocational education also should be developed along lines consistent with the type of professional training we are prepared to encourage. If biologists, botanists, agriculturalists, soil scientists, foresters, statisticians, social scientists are being trained, vocational and technical education should also follow along these general lines to create a source both of initial interest and of possible technicians to assist the professional workers. This would also apply to the public health fields, such as nurses' aides, midwives, laboratory technicians.

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The distinguishing feature of the new education (shinkyoiku) is the introduction of democratic ideas (minshushugi). The status of girl students and of women teachers has also changed. Before the war, the children were taught in the same room, but the boys and girls were separated. Now there is no segregation. Women teachers' salaries, formerly about 20% less than the mens', are now the same.

3

Schools and the Teacher

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There is much more to a school day than actual instruction. The

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This desire to learn English is more than a wish to communicate with Americans. Opportunities are open for those who know English, and people of all ages realize that theoretical and applied science and improved techniques come from the West, and that English is a means of understanding and applying this knowledge. Channelling this desire, through competent instruction in the schools, which will result in efficient self-guidance afterwards, is one of the significant problems of Okinawan education. But the techniques to be used on a permanent basis should be left to the professional linguist.

Should for example the methods of Basic English be adopted as a matter of policy and be encouraged in private study? Or should language study be based on the principles set forth by the rapidly advancing field of linguistics? Or should we accept the guidance of doctors of education who are specialists in curriculum construction and language training? My own bias is toward the manuals developed by the linguists, such as Spoken Japanese (EI 561-62). This approach, with its pattern sentences, is based on an analysis of the structure of the language itself. Basic English poses the problem whether the English taught is really basic. In my opinion, the crux of the matter is to study the presuppositions underlying these approaches and not the subject matter they produce. American learned societies, with the co-operation of the Army and the Navy, and the subsequent university programs in language study, have made great strides in these fields, both theoretical and applied. They represent the most advanced thinking in the world on these subjects, and the body of knowledge which they have should be most useful.[4]

5

Home, School, and Village

There are strong bonds between the home, the village, and the school. Parents help their children with their elementary readers. There is homework and classmates may stay at one another's houses over night. Parents are interested in children's school problems, but they do not visit the schools often, except at times arranged by the officials. PTA's have been organized, but it is still too early to tell how successful they will be. Since the PTA, like the Women's Association and the Young Men's Association, fits in the culture, it probably will thrive.

On entering school, the child is introduced to a new language which he has not spoken to any extent in childhood. Okinawan is the language of the pre-school child. Beginning school, therefore, is a bigger break than it is with most cultures.

The schools usually draw on several villages for their student body

[4] It is only fair to say that my own bias in favor of the approach developed by the technical linguists grows out of instruction I received in Japanese in the Army's Civil Affairs Training School Program in 1943-44.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

and the more advanced the school, the truer this is. Friendships are made early with children of nearby villages. Marriage may be the result of early school acquaintance, encouraged by the acceptance of free choice in marriage. A young adult has a scattering of friendships in the villages of his township. These class friendships are strong in school, in the teens, and early twenties. By the late twenties, the circle of friendships has broadened.

One of the most significant links between the family, village, and school is the annual athletic meet (undōkai). It is held in the fall. Preparations for this event are long and involve almost everybody.[5]

About a month before it is held, the meet is the topic of innumerable conversations. School children practice singing and athletic dancing drills at home. School teachers, who do most of the organizational work, practice with painful cacophony on their trumpets and clarinets. On the streets and lanes of Minatogawa, young men from 17 to 23 practice broad jumping late into the night. Shortly before the meet, all normal school activities stop. The teachers paint signs, mimeograph programs, and plan the order of the various events. The school officials have interminable committee meetings.

There is much bustle, laundering, hair washing, and cooking in a village the day before the meet. Special lunches including rice dyed red, bean curd, slices of fish paste, beef or pork are prepared. This field day is the closest approach to a picnic the Okinawans experience.

In good weather, the meet has a large attendance. A reserved area, with school desks and chairs is set aside for special guests. A person entering the reserved section to take his seat bows to the mayor and the group, steps forward a few paces, bows again, and takes his seat.

The mayor of the township presides over the meeting relieved by the vice-mayor or other school or village or township officials. On one day of the autumn meet, the mayor remained seated throughout the morning and afternoon in a drizzling rain. It was his duty, assisted by the principal and the teachers of the school, to give out the prizes.

Relay races, girls' dances, races and dashes for various age groups are endless. At present, the meeting is not confined to school children, but the younger men and women are included as well. The Young Men's Association is very active. Special events are included. In the Women's Association event, there was a mother and child race. In one case, a mother who entered the race with a child on her back and her young son as

5 These remarks are based on observations in Minatogawa, Oushichan, and Hanashiro villages, and on attendance at the Oushichan meet in November 1951. From discussions, I am certain they are very similar in Matsuda, in fact all over the island.

who have accepted them cannot afford to buy the recommended drugs. 758
Furthermore, the choice between the bush doctor and the trained
medical men in town is sometimes determined by lack of money to pay
for the more expensive services.

Cleanliness of the village and general sanitation are theoretically 744
under township control. Except for superficial biannual inspections, 575
nothing much is done about them. Perhaps the Women's Association,
once they carry out plans to take over this function, will be more
effective.

There are several cases of physically deformed, mentally deficient, 158
and mentally ill persons. A young man of about 20 years, born as an 734
idiot or imbecile, lives in the back of his parents' house, protected from 757
the gaze of outsiders. His family provides well for him, and when no
stranger is around to embarrass the family, the grandfather may take
him out to attend a village event. Another young man, who was normal,
one day began to frighten his family and eventually the whole village
by outbursts of violence. He attacked other persons and property. No-
body really knew how to cope with the situation, since the single
mental hospital in Okinawa could not keep him longer than six
months, and everybody realized that he was sick, not evil minded,
when he broke bottles and other glassware in the village store. The [755]
family tried religious treatment and locked the man up but never for
long, for he had intermittent periods of calm and seemingly rational
behavior. Another man, during a busy day, complained of sudden
headaches. Soon afterward he became severely depressed and attempted [762]
to commit suicide, quite an infrequent phenomenon in the Okinawan
village.

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Chapter 10.

Formal Education

The Japanese school system, which was introduced to Okinawa in the 871 ●
1880's, reached Taira by 1891. At that time a small school was estab- 177
lished in the village. Some of its early graduates are still alive and re-

871 177 call that in their quest for education, adolescents and even adults attended the elementary grades. The introduction of a formal school system in the village marked the beginning of changes in the culture; the Japanese language was introduced, and teachers transmitted Japanese culture as part of the curriculum (Kerr, 1958). It is found today [191] that people too old to have attended school—which in the early years was not compulsory—are the only ones who do not speak Japanese and who are illiterate. Their number is small, probably less than 5% of Taira's population.

872 346 [871] The school was moved about 40 years ago to nearby Kawata village, where a substantial schoolhouse was built. Today the elementary school is located there, about a one-mile walk from central Taira, but 3 miles from the outlying subvillage of Izena. The junior high school lies halfway between Taira and Kawata. During the war all school buildings were destroyed, but two new permanent structures for the elementary school were finished in 1954; one of these is a wooden building with a tile roof, the other an all-concrete, flat-roof structure of simple, modern design. Four classrooms and a teacher's room are located in these buildings. The remaining temporary, thatched-roof huts with three more classrooms will disappear as soon as the school rebuilding program is completed.

Built against a hill, the school has spacious grounds in front for sports and play. Classrooms for 30 to 35 students are fairly adequate in size and, in the new buildings, are well lighted by glass windows on sunny days but dark when skies are overcast because of the overhanging roof, which protects the hallway outside the classrooms from frequent showers, and the lack of artificial lighting. A building immediately be- [514] hind the classrooms houses latrines, separated for boys and girls, although both pass through the same passageway where boys use the urinals. Equipment is extremely poor and a great problem for principal and teachers. Simple, rickety desks and chairs of unfinished wood are bought or made by parents for their children. They are standard in design but differ in height according to the size of the child. Many first graders' furniture is made with future growth in mind, while some older students have outgrown their desks and chairs. An older sibling may pass on his table to a younger one if it is still serviceable after several years of nonchalant treatment.

876 [533] Teaching aids are few. A small organ is available for music lessons and is carried by several boys on the shoulders to the classroom where it is needed. Sometimes a teacher accompanies a singing class on a mouth organ. Visual aid material, maps, pictures, and charts are displayed in school rooms along with students' physical measurement tables and

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

sometimes a chart indicating their birthdays. There are also exhibits of students' drawings, which enliven the simple rooms. Each classroom has at least one blackboard built into the wall. By withdrawing removable walls in the new building, individual rooms can be converted into one large auditorium with a small stage for special occasions.

The personal equipment carried by students, other than books, consists of notebooks, pencils, a ruler, abacus, and, for those who can afford it, crayons and drawing paper. Sports equipment is also scanty, and replacement budgets are too low to remedy the situation. Students bring their own tools for garden and agricultural work as well as for work on the school grounds.

The teachers' room has desks for each teacher and the principal and a large table in the center for meetings. A small corner is reserved for a kerosene stove to prepare tea. There are also two cots for the teacher who remains on duty as night watchmen or for a child who feels ill during school hours. No privacy is provided for teachers, since students enter the room on any pretext or crowd around the windows if something attracts their curiosity.

Upkeep of the school is the responsibility of teachers and students; the only paid help is a girl who acts as janitor, nurse, and servant. The students, supervised by their teachers, tidy up classrooms after school, scrub walls and floors at regular intervals, take care of the hallway, cut grass, and weeds, and clear ditches on the school grounds. When school repairs are needed, teachers and parents help if no specialist's work is needed, as in repairing the thatch roof of temporary buildings.

The present school system, although under American supervision, follows the Japanese pattern. A six-year elementary school education and three years of junior high school are compulsory. After graduation at about the age of 15, students can enter high school if they choose and can qualify by passing the extremely rigid entrance examinations, which eliminate a considerable number of applicants. High school students have to move to Ogimi in a nearby township where they room and board while attending school.

The curriculum in the Okinawan schools is on the whole similar to that in Japan. Japanese language continues to be the medium, and textbooks, as well as other school materials, are purchased from Japan. Children therefore continue to be familiarized with the culture of Japan as were their parents in the days before American administration. A number of changes have taken place since that time, however. Since the Ryukyus are at present under an independent administration, all symbols and paraphernalia pertaining to the Japanese Imperial House and to the Japanese nation have been removed from the schools.

871 177 Nevertheless, the school remains, in the eyes of the villagers, as a rallying point for ties with Japan.

No attempts have been made until the present to introduce Okinawan culture other than by a few occasional references to Okinawan history or folklore. Teachers, during discussion of reading material, refer to home life, farm work and mountain work to illustrate points made in the books.* School is the first opportunity for Taira children to become acquainted with the world outside their own village and to relate their own experiences to the rest of the island, Japan, and other parts of the world. Since Japan is the dominant subject of reading material, however, it is clear that no awareness of being "Okinawan" is developed. [186]

875 [554] Teachers, many of whom are young, are devoted to their work and to the children, even though their pay is hardly commensurate with their high status in the community and does not represent adequate compensation for the long hours of teaching and administrative work that demand most of their time. In addition, the community in which the teacher lives makes demands on him as one of the educated, able leaders. Both men and women teach. Some of the younger ones who follow the urgent call for teaching positions do not have much training beyond a high school diploma. During the summer, special teacher training courses are now conducted by university professors from Japan and the University of the Ryukyus. Graduates from the University of the Ryukyus Education Department are still too few in number to reach a remote country school, such as the one in Kawata. Most teachers come from one of the surrounding communities; others, mostly bachelors, are from other parts of the island. Children are therefore well acquainted with many of the school teachers, some of whom are neighbors, relatives, or friends of the family. [874]

[554] The extremely modest appearance of teachers does not detract from their status and authority. The relationship between students and teachers is a mixture of respect, as dictated by custom, and intimacy, as a result of mutual affection. A conscientious teacher comes to know his students well during the school year and takes an active interest in them. Children can tell if a teacher is enthusiastic about his work and often establish a warm relationship with him. During our stay, the 872 first two grades were divided into two sections, taught by women, while male teachers taught the upper four grades.

The school day starts at 8:30 with a study period before the formal meeting of the teacher and students on the open grounds in front of

* Some practical work in gardening begins in the upper elementary school classes. Only Junior High School students work in the fields as part of their curriculum.

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
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the school. Classes are held from 9 o'clock until noon with one recess. After an hour for lunch, lessons resume for all grades above first. Classes, sports, and cleanup end between 2 and 3:30 in the afternoon, the highest grades staying the longest.

All grades receive instruction in Japanese writing and reading, arithmetic, science, music, and drawing. Social science is introduced in the second grade. Since each class has one teacher for all subjects, shifts from one to the next subject may come in the middle of an hour. The greatest amount of time is spent in teaching Japanese reading and writing. At first grade level the simplified syllabary is taught, followed in the second grade by another syllabary and the first Chinese characters.

Parents maintain contact with the school through a Parent-Teachers Association, called by the American abbreviation, PTA. Every household is a member. Those with children of school age are regular members who pay 15 yen (12 cents) a month; others are supposed to pay 5 yen but have become so delinquent that their fees have been dropped. The actual PTA work is done by a committee from each village, including the headman and the heads of the Women's and Young People's Associations. The main purpose of the PTA is to support the school in some of its maintenance problems. Attendance of all parents at a general meeting occurs only once a year when elections of officers take place and the PTA budget is discussed and approved.

The principals of both schools are represented in township affairs and in the associations of their own community. Contact between village leaders and school representatives is therefore frequent. Since education taxes are the single largest tax item which villagers pay (80% of the total tax), this representation of the principals is a necessary but burdensome duty for them.

Township education taxes are supplemented by government subsidies. School taxes are paid by all households according to their income and average about 515 yen ($4.30) yearly. Since 1952, government orders require education taxes to be levied separately from other taxes so that people are aware of the amount destined for education; tax collection is one of the main problems in village administration, and school principals are sometimes called on to explain the need for such taxation and the obligations of individuals to carry their share of the burden.

The administration of funds and general school matters are the responsibility of an official in the township finance department. During 1954–1955, 310,344 yen ($2586) were collected by the township in education taxes. The government subsidy amounted to 3,716,397 yen

871 ($30,970) for the four schools in the township. The largest expenses
658 are salaries, construction, and maintenance. Money is also provided for
[651] conferences, supplies, and other items on the school budget. The PTA budget serves to supplement the regular school appropriations, which are always insufficient to cover all expenses.

The concern with educational matters is carried into the community in another way. Taira has established a so-called scholarship incentive fund for which money is contributed by the village store and some prominent Taira businessmen from the city, such as the former mayor. This fund is used to give awards, usually notebooks or pencils, to all students, double amounts to those with outstanding attendance records. Honor students are not singled out. The largest part of the fund is used as financial help to families with one or more high school students and to widows with schoolchildren who have no other breadwinner in their family. This is another example of direct support of education by the community.

871 As with all matters concerning village life, participation of parents in school affairs and an interest in the school's goals and problems depend greatly on the educational and economic background of individual families. For this reason, scholastic standing of children is frequently a reflection of the interest and encouragement they receive at home. Incentive is therefore to some extent passed on from successful parents to their children, and if one can speak of a succession in leadership, it is partly determined by this instruction.

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Chapter 11

Recreation

517 No one can remain in the village of Taira for long without recognizing that its people have a happy faculty for enjoying themselves during those periods which they can spare from their work. The daily routine is broken by a good number of rests and holidays, and the full and unburdened indulgence in social activities at such times, without any ap-

857 526 [157] fun of it, but few signs of involvement with attaining outstanding performance. Losers are not teased or ridiculed, although a good performer is occasionally given an encouraging remark by others who practice.

Group games are usually played after the schoolchildren have returned to the village. One of the popular games is a version of prisoner's base similar to that played in the United States. This game is played with much yelling, laughing, and noisy challenging. Equally popular is a version of "kick the can." This game is exciting and fast moving. It is a game which can lead to arguments, since one must trust the honesty of the person who is "it" and claims to have seen another player. Brief arguments arise and are quickly settled. Part of the fun seems to be teasing and challenging the tagger.

535 857 [527] [871] These are games that children may play on any day in the year. During holidays they are sometimes asked to entertain adults with dances. Little girls learn the traditional Okinawan dances from kindergarten days on, either by watching or by coaching of an older person, a friend, one's older sister, or mother. Neither kindergarten nor school programs include the teaching of such rich Okinawan heritage as classical dances. Boys do not begin to imitate the burlesque dances of their male elders until adolescence. But they are sometimes invited, together with girls, to present group dances or little plays for the adults. Adults seem to enjoy most the performances of Okinawan dances by little girls who may have learned the rhythm and movements but not the restraint of serious adult presentations. They are delighted if a 6-year-old, dressed in bright-colored costume, innocently wiggles her hips in a rather suggestive way.

857 [150] Children who perform for adults show no stage fright. At school, where little sketches are presented on the stage, there is a complete ease in improvising. Nobody is embarrassed if he forgets a line, a song, or a cue, and the recitation contests which we have already mentioned are carried out with much zest.

[512] Schoolchildren are supposed to remain at home after 8 o'clock in the evening to do their studies. This rule is encouraged by the school but rarely enforced by parents. Many children, boys and girls, appear outside after dark, and on moonlight nights they often resume their playing. Off and on, a couple of elementary schoolboys are attracted to the store where the village truck arrives with goods from the city after nightfall. There they stand in the dim yellow light of the kerosene lamp, watching, helping, or just listening to some of the men who come to have their sake bottles filled. If a bath has been prepared for their families, their turn will come sometime after the older males in

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Intimate contact with Japanese coupled with this word borrowing has resulted in a tendency toward slight sound shifts in the direction of Japanese phonology; this is particularly true among the bilingual speakers. The same process is operative in the Japanese of these Okinawan speakers in that there is a tendency toward Okinawan phonology. 194 177

The real strongholds of Okinawan speech today are the family and the rural areas. In an old and relatively unchanged village like Kanegusuku little Japanese is heard despite the fact that most of the villagers are bilingual. That Okinawan is the language of the family is best demonstrated by the pre-school-age children who do not speak or understand any Japanese aside from a few greetings and polite phrases. Likewise men over sixty and women over fifty-five usually cannot speak Japanese. The remainder of the village, approximately seventy percent of the total, is bilingual; however, this figure is somewhat misleading in so far as actual usage is concerned. A majority of the married women use Japanese infrequently since Okinawan is the language of their daily lives, which are largely confined to the village and home. For the men, a number of whom have seen service abroad in the Japanese forces, there is a greater freedom of movement and a wider range of contacts providing more occasion for the use of Japanese. Yet within the village many of them preferred to use Okinawan, and even the high school students were inclined to shed their Japanese on returning to the village. A number of bilingual informants ascribed this preference for Okinawan to the influence of the old people who understood Japanese imperfectly or not at all. As one informant put it, "The old people in this village just don't like being spoken to in Japanese, and if some person does this, they say he is trying to be big." Undoubtedly their influence is a strong factor, but this preference is also likely attributable to a low degree of proficiency in Japanese. Prior to the postwar period few villagers obtained more than a sixth grade education; consequently, many are not as articulate in Japanese as they are in Okinawan. It should also be noted that within the village a selective factor operates so as to perpetuate the use of Okinawan. Mention is made in another section of this report of a mayor's comment to the effect that all those who receive a good education, high school or university, soon leave the village. Thus, the very group most likely to further the spread of Japanese leaves before its influence is felt. 191 178 177 621 [871] [146]

The resentment of the oldest generation toward the use of Japanese resolves itself among the younger, bilingual generations into an attitude that Japanese imparts a certain formality to an occasion, and hence situations calling for the use of Okinawan or Japanese tend to be rather compartmentalized in their minds. Formal occasions prescribe the use of Japanese and informal ones Okinawan. Village political meetings and elections were always conducted in Japanese, and when the 'son' officials made one of their periodic inspections of the village, only Japanese was used in addressing them. On the other hand the use of Japanese at a party would be regarded as too formal and a bit unfriendly, and, of course, with old people and children only Okinawan is used. Besides the formal-informal dichotomy there exists the feeling among the better-educated bilinguals that Japanese is a modern and sophisticated language whereas Okinawan is backward and rustic. 191 829 177

There are several aspects of Okinawan culture wherein the local language is used to the exclusion of Japanese; chief among these are the theater 191 178

(mentioned previously), song, and the indigenous religion. Okinawan song and music undoubtedly exceed both Japanese and Western in popularity; in fact, no other facet of Okinawan culture has so successfully withstood the changes of the past seventy-five years. Songs such as the Kagiyadefu (which some Okinawans liken to a national anthem), Nubui Kuduchi, Hamachidori, Tanchame are known and loved by all. Some of the phonograph record stores in Naha carry as many as several hundred different recordings of Okinawan songs, and virtually all of these are recorded in Okinawan. All priestesses of the indigenous religion interviewed by the author stated that Okinawan was the language of prayer and ceremony; to some this was a burden, as in the case of one priestess who had spent most of her life in Japan. A few admitted that the language of the ceremonies and particularly that of the old songs or umui (sometime rendered omoro) was rather obscure and not fully understood; these are transmitted orally from the older priestess to her successor and undoubtedly contain many archaic words. Outside the formal religious structure yet inextricably linked to it are shamans (yuta) and fortune tellers ('ekisha'). The former, most often a woman, uses Okinawan almost exclusively in rites concerned with divining, exorcism, and curing. The latter, nearly always a male, is usually a fairly well-educated person, as the profession is based on interpretations of certain books used in conjunction with the ancient Chinese Book of Changes (I Ching), and either Japanese or Okinawan, depending on the customer, may be used in giving the reading. Both practitioners are extremely popular, but the fortune teller is usually found in the cities and towns whereas the shaman may be found in Naha or the smallest hamlet.

Japanese With the abdication of Shō Tai in 1879 the Japanese government initiated a program designed for integrating Okinawa into the national state as rapidly as possible. An effort was made to stamp out all vestiges of Okinawan culture, utilizing techniques ranging from education and indoctrination to repressive laws and police measures. Greatest emphasis was given to making Japanese speakers out of Okinawans. Leavenworth quotes Governor Narahara as stating that the creation of Japanese speakers was of more value than all the repressive laws prohibiting certain customs.[1] At the start the Japanese were hindered by a lack of schools and teachers, and so the program moved ahead slowly. An effective national school system covering the rural areas where the bulk of the population was located and taking in both sexes was not fully operative until about the time of World War I. The failure of Japanese to displace Okinawan can be attributed largely to a lack of time and a lack of facilities for education beyond the elementary level. By the time of World War II but two generations were schooled in Japanese, and the majority of these had received no more than six years of education.

Though Japanese failed to displace Okinawan, it did succeed in becoming a necessity in the lives of most people and in establishing itself as the prestige language. With the government, press, schools, cinema, radio, and high-level commerce utilizing Japanese exclusively, participation in modern life without a knowledge of Japanese became impossible. The incentives towards competence in Japanese were many, whereas there appeared to be little gained

[1] Leavenworth, 1905, p. 37.

by clinging to the native speech. Naturally it became impossible for a student to obtain a higher education or for any Okinawan to secure a government position without an adequate mastery of Japanese. A good knowledge of Japanese became the first prerequisite for those who wished to improve their status. 191 177 554

Nearly all children in the rural areas and perhaps a majority of those in the urban areas first learn to speak Japanese when they enter school. It would seem that the main task of the elementary schools is to provide the students with an adequate knowledge of Japanese. On Okinawa as in all schools throughout the areas occupied by the Japanese, a standard language is taught; for the Okinawan child this means learning a new language, while for the child in Japan it means learning at the most a new dialect. Obviously a sixth-grade child on Okinawa will not have a proficiency in Japanese comparable to a sixth-grader in Japan. A recent testing of Naha and Tokyo school children indicated that the Okinawan children were far behind in nearly every subject. One informant, an urbanite who had lived for a time in Japan and rather prided himself on his Japanese, remarked that this clearly indicated the deterioration of the schools in the post-war period. When it was pointed out that this more likely reflected a lower educational attainment due to a language handicap, he readily agreed, and subsequent discussion revealed that a "mixture" of Japanese and Okinawan was spoken in his home. In this case the siblings, who had received high-school educations, used Japanese to one another but spoke only Okinawan to their mother, and the child of the house heard mostly Okinawan from her elders! A Ryukyuan scholar now holding a position in a large Japanese university informed the author that most high-school students are very hesitant about their Japanese and fear making a mistake. When this person first came to Japan after winning a scholarship to a higher school, he was startled by the fluency of the Japanese children! It should be noted that the post-war addition of English to the elementary school curriculum (from the 4th year on) serves only to impose another linguistic burden on the Okinawan child. Grade-school children who had studied English were completely unable to understand the simplest printed phrases; mastery was usually limited to counting from one to ten and reciting the alphabet as far as H without error, though the children can hardly be blamed, considering the texts and teaching level. The chief drawback to the texts is the transcription of English sounds in the Japanese syllabary; thus, a child is taught to pronounce ball as "booru", Smith as "sumisu", here as "hiya", etc. A friend who sat in on a class in English related that had he not been forearmed with a copy of the text and the knowledge that the class was studying English he would never have recognized the subject matter. 191 177 871

In the greater Naha area, which serves as the cultural as well as the administrative and commercial center of the island, the use of Japanese is far more common than elsewhere. Prior to the war there was a sizeable Japanese community here, and from Naha things Japanese have diffused into the countryside. However, the Naha informant's home where a "mixture" of Japanese and Okinawan was spoken was not an atypical one, and this can readily be attested to by visiting the playground of any elementary school in Naha and listening to the speech of children. It may be expected that the post-war addition of three years of junior high school to the compulsory education period will do much to further the advance of Japanese. 191 177 [871]

expected to keep to his studies and not merely to avoid the distractions of adult pleasures but actually not to be interested in them. He is given special considerations as a student, a place to study, quiet, and freedom from irksome tasks. This consideration probably varies with the position of the student in the family and with his success as a student. Boys undoubtedly get more consideration than girls, older sons than younger sons---though if an older son has been unable to go on to school and is helping a younger brother go on, the younger brother may get greater consideration and feel greater responsibility. This special treatment lasts as long as the young person is in school or as long as the family can afford not to rely on him for economic assistance. But even the young man in university who is working part time to keep himself in school is expected not to be interested in the sorts of pleasures sought by younger boys who stopped their schooling much earlier.

Today junior high school is compulsory, but the majority of students go no farther. The high schools strictly limit the number of students that they can enroll, so that many junior high graduates who would like to go on to high school are unable to. But whether a youth stops his schooling at junior high school, high school, or later, the change in treatment and attitudes is the same. He "enters society". He is now expected to do an adult's work and contribute to the family's support. At the same time he is expected to spend his evenings with the other young men, drinking, teasing the girls, and staying out half the night---behavior a student would have no interest in, at least in theory.

While a youth is in school he belongs to a students' organization ('gakuseikai'). After he leaves school he is expected to join the youth organization ('Seinenkai'). The present Youth Organization is the successor of the pre-war, Japan-wide organization, less the militarism and jingoism. It is organized on a Ryukyu-wide basis, but local chapters make their own constitutions, statements of aims, and so forth---probably with no great variation. The aims expressed in the constitutions seen could mainly be put under the headings intellectual and moral self-improvement and community uplift. Meetings are held perhaps twice a month, one being for business and serious discussion, the other for purely social purposes. The social meetings feature music played on the 'shamisen', dancing, and 'awamori'. Among other serious business, in some communities the Youth Organization engages in clean-up or repair projects and hires itself out for farm labor. Where it receives pay, the funds probably generally go toward the expense of the social meetings.

The Youth Organization takes young people of both sexes, but there are usually more men, since women drop out at marriage while men may remain in after marriage if they choose to, until 30, according to one rule. In the country, membership after finishing school is represented as compulsory. In the city, however, the compulsion is lacking and many who are not interested in joining manage to stay out. But in the country few would suggest that anyone had the right not to join. When I asked a past president of the organization in Yamada if everyone joined, he replied to the effect, "Oh yes, all must join, we have a rule." And he proceeded to point out the regulation

kōgyō-zei	Industry Tax.	632
gyūbasha-zei	Horsecart or Oxcart Tax.	651
jidōsha-zei	Automotive Vehicle Tax (all types).	
rajio-zei	Radio Tax.	
denchū-zei	Electric Pole Tax.	
tochiku-zei	Slaughter Tax.	
chikken-zei	Dog Tax.	
senpaku-zei	Boat Tax.	
jitensha-zei	Bicycle Tax.	
denwa-zei	Telephone Tax.	
jigyō-zei	Business Tax	
kenkyu-hi	Study Fee. This is assessed on the basis of land holding, and it is used to provide a yearly bonus, 50% of one month's salary, to all the school teachers of Kanegusuku-son. The 'son' feels that the salaries paid by the central government are too low and uses this tax as a means of supplementing them.	[871]

The following work schedule was copied from the blackboard in the township offices of Kanegusuku-son in May, 1954. All of the listed activities are those which must be handled in addition to the regular work load. Virtually all of the scheduled meetings required the presence of the mayor (sonchō); a number of these were held outside of his district (son). At the present time American work schedules are followed. Saturday afternoon and Sunday are regarded as holidays for the office staff, though oftentimes the mayor and department heads may work on those days if there is pressing business. 632 [527]

Schedule of Activities for Kanegusuku-son Office
for May 1954

May
1st -
2nd - Sunday
3rd - Industrial Conference at Ryukyu-American Cultural Center, Naha.
4th - Welfare Week, May 4th through 10th.
5th - 'Kochōkai'. Meeting of all village mayors at 2 p.m.
6th -
7th -
8th -
9th - Sunday
10th - Meeting of all mayors of municipalities at Okinawa Kaikan, Naha, 10 a.m. Proclamation of law for welfare of children at Sekai Theater, Naha, 2 p.m.
11th -
12th - Injections for pigs for prevention of infectious diseases.
13th - Meeting of Assembly Chairmen's Association of Southern Okinawa at Agricultural Cooperative Club.
Injections for pigs.
14th - Industrial inspection of Southern Okinawa.
Injections for pigs.

3. Police

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Local governments of the municipalities ('shi-chō-son') and the various 'ku' (villages and wards) exercise no control over the police stationed in their areas. Central police headquarters are located in Naha, and the organization of the police command is outside the regular civil structure except at the top national level. The police officer located in Kanegusuku-son reports directly to the district police headquarters in Itoman which in turn reports to Naha. In addition to maintaining law and order the police are charged with certain responsibilities in the fields of sanitation, health, and public welfare. Crime rates on Okinawa are low, particularly in the rural areas, and policemen stationed there rarely face serious problems of law violation. A 'son' policeman has a "beat" which he is supposed to patrol each day unless other business is pressing. Actually his visits to some of the villages are rather infrequent, since there is little need for his presence. When a villager dies, it is usually the policeman who checks and certifies the cause of death. Certain dangerous or highly contagious diseases such as leprosy or smallpox must by law be reported, and any infractions of this are usually investigated by the police. If a restaurant or food store is reported as unsanitary, it is the police who take steps to see that the situation is corrected.

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Not infrequently the policeman is called upon to function informally as a judge in settling minor disputes which in the United States would be taken to court. One man rented out a room in his home to a former schoolmate; after living and eating there for several months, the roomer disappeared without making any payment for his room and board. A few months later the owner located this person's place of employment, collared him as he left work, and dragged him to the nearest policeman. The policeman listened patiently to both sides of the argument and then ruled that the roomer must pay the entire amount due the owner, ¥6000 ($50.00), at the rate of ¥2000 per month. The two disputants signed an agreement to this effect, and the policeman also signed it "to make it official". An American would regard this action as an abuse of police power; yet, an Okinawan would see nothing untoward in it. In light of this it is worth noting that the jiturei who headed the rural district (majiri) under the old kingdom functioned as policeman, judge, and administrator.

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In the matter of juvenile delinquency the school and police are reported to work closely together. One police officer stated that when juveniles commit misdemeanors in his area they are usually turned over to their schools for special "education". That an errant child should be released to the custody of his school rather than to his family would seem an inconsistency in a society which places so much emphasis on family. In America and perhaps in all of Western society the teaching of ethics is largely a function of the home, but in Japan and Okinawa this is considered a task for the school.

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To an outsider Okinawan police appear to be efficient in the performance of their duty and possessed of a pride in their job and a fairly

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CHAPTER X: EDUCATION

W. P. Suttles

121 None of the SIRI team worked on education as such. We have no basis
•891 for a discussion of the physical condition of the schools, number of teachers per pupil, texts, etc., other than the data readily available in USCAR publications. However, it may be useful to include in this report a brief chapter on attitudes toward education, the role of the teacher, and evidence of the results of education, as we have seen them in the course of our research. As I shall try to point out, there are indications that education on Okinawa may not be doing all that it professes to do. Yet it is a remarkable and praiseworthy fact that education has progressed as well as it has, considering the truly terrible destruction of the war and the long and trying process of rebuilding the material facilities and the morale of teachers and students.

1. Respect for Education

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554 Respect for education and the educated is deeply rooted in Okinawan
565 culture. For several centuries administrative posts in the Ryukyuan kingdom
[647] were filled by officials drawn from the gentry class and appointed, it is said, on the basis of an examination. The gentry class held a virtual monopoly of education, which was thus one of the bases of their superior status. It is not surprising that the gentry class of the past is identified with learning. An illiterate old man of gentry descent once explained to me that the gentry were originally teachers appointed to various villages, thus misinterpreting the former bureaucracy as a school system.

891 Another profession open to the educated man in the past, and in the
554 present, is that of the diviner. One of the native terms for this person is
791 suumuchi, the "person with books", his books being the ones with which he reads a person's fate. This is a profession that commands respect. It is quite likely that at one time the diviner was the only person who possessed books with whom the ordinary peasant ever had contact. Books were thus associated with status and with nearly supernatural power.

554 Education is still regarded as a means of rising in status. As indi-
891 cated in Chapter V, the potential scholar is given special treatment by his family because all may participate in the rise in status that his education may bring. But times have changed. In the days of the Ryukyuan kingdom the rewards for education may have come automatically, but under the Japanese administration this was less true, and perhaps least of all today. Education is indeed still valued for its own sake, but it is expected to bring material rewards; if it does not, its authenticity may be questioned.

554 Still, the prestige of learning probably accounts for a type of pseudo-scholar who may be found both in the rural and in the urban scene. In several villages we encountered such individuals, elderly men who were regarded as local sages, who discoursed learnedly and uncritically on local traditions, who revealed information derived from one or two carefully guarded books

(their 'tane-hon', "seed books"), and who seemed to have little contact with others of their own interests. (I must hasten to add that there are also genuine local historians and folklorists who are critical, open to new ideas, and in contact with reputable men in their field; but these are clearly in the minority.) In the city the pseudo-scholar may be a man teaching a subject that he is totally incompetent to teach or he may be one of the numerous diviners and medical practitioners described in Chapter IX. Some of the diviners (sanjinsoo), however, could be better described as genuinely serious scholars working in a pseudo-science.

2. The Role of the Teacher

Despite the great importance attached to the family in East Asian societies and which the Japanese government has always professed to attach to it, the Japanese education system of pre-war times actually took more authority away from the family than does the American system. Incidents related by informants indicate that both before the war and since a teacher may reprimand a student for breaking school regulations outside of school hours and even in the student's own home. The police also may report the misdeeds of a student to the student's teacher rather than to his parents.[1] Partly this authority must have come from the teacher's position in a nationalized system of education and his role as the local spokesman for Japanese nationalism. And on Okinawa teachers had the additional task of creating good Japanese out of little Okinawans. This meant teaching the Japanese language as well as the Japanese ideology.[2]

Since the war the status of the teacher has deteriorated. Partly this may be due to the fact that he is no longer the local representative of a powerful government, and partly it may be due to poor morale resulting from the tragedy of war, but it is also undoubtedly due to a lower economic status. Teachers were formerly relatively well-paid. In 1954 Okinawan teachers were receiving a basic average salary of ¥3400 per month, principals, ¥6110. A police chief, by contrast, receives ¥6470. An elementary teacher, who must have 12 years of schooling and six months of professional training, at present receives 75% of the salary of a policeman on the beat, who must have 9 years of schooling and three months of training; in the prewar period the teacher received 155% of the salary of the policeman.

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1 See also "Police" in Chapter VI.

2 That in this effort they were not always successful is revealed by a few anecdotes: Someone is said to have encouraged a child to interrupt his teacher's lecture on the virtues of the semidivine monarch with the question, "Does the Emperor produce night soil?" Students are said to have referred to him secretly as 'Ten-chan', "Emmy-Boy", rather than 'Tennō Heika', "His Imperial Majesty the Emperor". And the very old and the very young are said to have parodied 'Amaterasu Ōmikami', the name of the Sun Goddess, with "Aman-tarashi kuman-tarashi 'waa nu kami", "dropping it there, dropping it here, the pig god."

875 554 178 As indicated above, education is highly regarded as a key to success, but it still must produce financial rewards. Education earns for one the esteem of his fellows, but not as much as does money. This decline in status seems to have produced considerable dissatisfaction among teachers. This is probably true at all levels. The best-known Okinawan scholars, for example, have mainly chosen to remain in Japan.

3. Classroom Atmosphere

876 [871] Informants gave the impression that the pre-war classroom atmosphere was decidedly more authoritarian than at present. Most of what was taught was rather rigidly prescribed by the Ministry of Education and questions were not encouraged. Students rarely spoke up, partly because of the attitudes of the teachers and partly at embarrassment at having to speak in Japanese. Free discussion was probably less common even than in Japan.

In their attempt to make their students learn Japanese some schools adopted the tag system that has been mentioned elsewhere in connection with the prevention of the misuse or theft of crops. In the Yamada school before the war there was for each class a 'hōgen fuda', "dialect tag", which was hung around the neck of the first child heard speaking "the dialect", that is, the Okinawan language. This child wore the tag in disgrace until he heard another child slip into Okinawan, whereupon he hung the tag around that child's neck. And so it went from child to child. The difference between such a system of control and those regarded as appropriate by modern Western educators can hardly be exaggerated. It is true that the tag does resemble the old dunce cap, known to us from cartoons of the last century, in that it uses ridicule as the form of punishment. But in other respects it is different. First, it means that one child is singled out to function as an unwilling policeman, his functioning as policeman being part of his disgrace; that is, as long as he is in disgrace with the tag he is forced to watch for another culprit. Second, the system does not provide equal punishment for the same crime; one child may wear the tag a day while another wears it a week or more, both for the same offense. And third, the theory behind the system does not assume that the offense can be eliminated altogether; on the contrary there must always be some child to make the mistake of speaking Okinawan for the system to work.

[685] As used in the village as a whole the tag system sometimes worked considerable hardship. A person who received the tag for cutting someone else's crop or his own cane out of season had to pay two sen a day to the village. It is said that there is an old woman in Naha who was sold when a girl into prostitution by her father because he could not get rid of the tag and could no longer make the payments. Here is a concept of justice that is indeed remote from ours.

876 178 875 [179] No doubt the tag system is no longer in use anywhere on Okinawa. Students say that the schools are less authoritarian and that there is considerably more freedom of discussion. Yet many of the teachers are the same persons who imposed such controls as the tag system a few years ago. Some may have opposed the former rigidity and some may have changed their views since, but it would be surprising indeed if all have taken over American ideas.

4. Present Problems

● 891 If one asks the question, "Is the present education system giving Okinawa what it needs?", even a casual glance suggests a negative answer. It should be obvious from some of the material of this report that the ordinary Okinawan is disastrously ignorant of many things that concern him---in economics, politics, and particularly in matters of health and sanitation. Yet this ignorance does not seem to be confined to the less educated. It was a college student who gave some of the folk beliefs about disease. Another young man indicated that the schools themselves by attempted rationalization may be perpetuating an uncritical attitude; his high school teacher had explained that crows do not really know when someone is going to die because they possess supernatural power; they know it because they can smell death.

ooo The difficulty lies partly in the unwillingness of most Okinawans, one might say most human beings, to re-examine cherished beliefs. Ignorance of the true nature of disease, as discussed in Chapter IX, is not merely due to the absence of knowledge, but rather to the presence of a set of traditional beliefs that form a body of "knowledge", incorrect though it may be, that provides the individual with the explanations he needs. In order to teach modern scientific explanations, educators must determine what the body of folk belief consists of, re-evaluate it, and devise methods whereby its falsity can be demonstrated. Doing this would not be easy; it would be doubly hard because of the greater importance given to the opinions of older people in Okinawan society.

871 564 Ignorance may also be due to lack of interest. Education is a source of prestige to the educated individual. But education as defined by Okinawan culture perhaps does not include such subjects as botany and entomology. At any rate certain fields of study, English literature for example, seem to have enormous attraction, while others, applied sciences such as agriculture, have little. Moreover, other observers have reported that among those Okinawans who are engaged in work in applied sciences there seems to be a distaste for field work and a preference for office work. This too may reflect a higher value placed on sedentary "paper work" and a lower one on work with the hands.

876 177 As Lebra has pointed out in Chapter II, most Okinawans suffer from a linguistic handicap. Most children learn Okinawan in the home and then have to learn a second language, Japanese, in the school. This immediately gives them less time for learning other things. But their troubles do not end with the acquisition of a speaking knowledge of Japanese. This is not so very difficult since the two languages are closely related. But the Japanese system [212] of writing, with its two native syllabaries plus the Chinese characters, is incredibly complicated and requires an enormous expenditure of time and effort. A student learning the geography of Okinawa, for example, must spend a great part of his time learning the characters for Okinawan place names and thus, as in one instance observed, he may not get around to learning where all of them are.

The opinion of a former teacher is worth noting. When I worked with him in 1945 he told me that he and other teachers who privately believed that

876 177 212 Japanese nationalism had been perverting education had felt that their only means of creating more open minds was to teach as many characters as possible so that the students might later read a wider range of material. In 1954 he said that he was now convinced that the Japanese, and the Okinawans, would be better off if SCAP had forced them to discard characters and adopt a system of romanization. This man is now a printer and publisher; the characters are his own stock-in-trade.

000 The difficulties facing any sort of language reform in Japan are great. If romanized Japanese only were taught in Japanese schools, the whole of Japanese literature would soon have to be republished in romanized form and most modern scientific works would have to be not only republished but rewritten as well. The great number of homophones in the technical vocabulary of Japanese are distinguishable to the eye because of the different characters with which they are written, but they are not distinguishable to the ear nor would they be distinguishable written in romanized form. Romanization would require the introduction of many new terms. Moreover, because of the esthetic appeal of the characters and the high prestige derived from a knowledge of them, many educated Japanese would have a strong emotional resistance to discarding them. During the occupation certain reforms were instituted but in some respects they only increased the complexity of the system by introducing for some characters simplified forms which now must be learned in addition to the older, more complex forms. It is quite likely that any attempt to reform the Japanese system of writing on Okinawa would meet with even greater resistance than it would meet with in Japan.

212 177 In addition to the difficulties of the writing system, the literary forms of Japanese present some differences in style which make them difficult for the less educated to read. I was once present in an Okinawan home when a child in the second grade brought home a mimeographed request from the school for a certain fee. I looked at the notice and found that I could not be sure of the readings of all of the characters or of the meaning of the construction of the first paragraph, although I can read technical material in my own field. I asked the mother, who had had six years of schooling, to read it to me. She admitted that she could not read it either, except for the place where it said how much and what for. Later I showed it to a University student, who, after some stumbling, read the first paragraph and put it into colloquial Japanese. It was of course merely a formal salutation. It did not contribute to the meaning of the notice and it did not matter that the average parent could not read it. Yet if it had been omitted, the few educated parents---perhaps those from whom larger contributions were expected---might have shaken their heads and asked what education is coming to that teachers are no longer capable of writing proper Japanese.

876 177 871 As if there were not enough linguistic problems, recently the English language has been introduced into the Primary School curriculum beginning at the Fifth Grade. It appears to be taught in most cases by persons who do not themselves speak English or even read it with any fluency. Moreover, it appears to be taught by the 'katakana' method; that is, the texts or the teachers attempt to teach the pronunciation of English words by spelling them out in the Japanese syllabary. The Japanese syllabary is admirably well-adapted to the representation of Japanese sounds, but woefully deficient for

CHAPTER XI: CULTURE CHANGE IN RURAL OKINAWA

W. P. Lebra

Within a span of less than fifty years Okinawa has been twice subjected to periods of accelerated culture change. The first began in 1899 when the Japanese administration abolished the system of communal land ownership and taxation then extant in the rural areas and introduced private ownership. Land reform was followed by modernization of the government and the establishment of compulsory education. A second period of rapid change began in World War II with the American invasion and the establishment of military government.

The Japanese Impact (1879-1945) During the first twenty years of Japanese administration relatively few changes were introduced, but beginning with the land reform of 1899-1903 there followed a series of changes which completely altered the fabric of Okinawan society. The policies of the Japanese administration and the results of the long period of close contact with Japanese culture effected the conversion of Okinawans into Japanese nationals, destruction of the self-sufficiency of the rural village, modernization of government, weakening of the kin group, and greater participation in national life.

The transformation of Okinawans into Japanese nationals was accomplished through the establishment of a national school system which indoctrinated the students with the language and culture of Japan. Official Japanese policy aimed at the eradication of Okinawan culture; this was carried out through the schools and by means of repressive laws, police measures, and the practice of discrediting things Okinawan. Although there was some Okinawan reaction to this discrimination, the government was ultimately successful in creating a favorable response to Japanese culture. Its accomplishment was largely due to the close affinity of the Japanese and Okinawans. The linguistic and cultural resemblances between the two are so close as to make their differences bridgeable. A wider gulf might have produced antipathy, but instead the superior civilization of the Japanese came to be regarded as worthy of emulation.

The Japanese did discriminate against Okinawan culture, but as an alternative they offered, in theory at least, equal participation in their own culture. The process of assimilation was greatly facilitated by the cultural indoctrination of the schools; each successive generation came to feel and act more Japanese than the previous one. Okinawan culture was not eradicated, as the space of time was too short, but its creativity was reduced. An important factor in aiding the acceptance of Japanese culture was that the ideas and technology of the modern world came to Okinawa through Japan; hence, much of what was of foreign origin was accepted by the Okinawans as Japanese.

An important aspect of the change which came about under the Japanese administration was the realization for the average individual of a greater participation in the social and political life of the country. The mental

Education The Japanese established the first schools in the rural areas some time before World War I. Great emphasis was placed on making Japanese speakers and nationals out of Okinawans. Today most of the population is bilingual; those who speak only a dialect of the Ryukyuan language are persons over sixty and pre-school children. Most Okinawans have come to regard themselves as Japanese. 871 • 177 [91] [829]

A major change in the postwar educational system has been the addition of three years to the period of compulsory schooling, making a total of nine years. Since the schools continue to provide a Japanese education, the effect will be to increase the Japanization of Okinawa, raise literacy, and ultimately make all speakers bilingual. As a student is usually excused from all work by the family, this measure has served to withhold a large number of teenagers from the labor market.

In the rural areas the author heard frequent praise for the extension of the schooling period and the new school construction program initiated by the military government. Most rural peoples stated that educational opportunities were poor for them in the prewar period; high school education was said to be particularly difficult for a village child to achieve. Now they feel that they are realizing equality with the urban areas. The urbanite is more likely to suggest that the quality of education has deteriorated in the postwar period. Both rural and urban people were agreed that one decided improvement has been that students no longer fight among themselves. Before and during the war all students were organized into small groups based on area of residence; each group was headed by a student leader who shepherded his charges to and from school in semi-military formation. Rivalry between these organized groups frequently led to gang fighting so severe that the intervention of teachers or police was often necessary to restore order. 871 369 178 877 178

Rural people regard education as providing one of the best opportunities for improving one's status; consequently, the improvement of educational opportunities will have far-reaching effects on social mobility. Those who acquire a high school or university education rarely remain in the village, and the few who do remain adopt an occupation other than farming. 871 554

Economy Money was virtually non-existent in the old Okinawan village; barter was the chief means of exchange. Taxes under the communal land holding system were paid in grain and cloth. The land reforms initiated by the Japanese brought the introduction of tax payments in cash. Increasing emphasis on sugar production due to governmental encouragement and subsidy did much to destroy the self-sufficiency of the village and brought dependence on a cash crop. The period of Japanese administration was marked by a gradual adoption of a money economy in the rural areas. 437 436 178 177

Okinawans state that there is a far greater amount of money in the village today than in the prewar period. Some assert that due to governmental price controls they were never able to realize a fair return for their products (chiefly sugar) in the prewar era, but the great increase in money in recent years seems largely attributable to factors relating to the military occupation. Today over twenty-five percent of the total labor force is employed by the military and in subsidiary occupations such as construction; this steep rise in 434 178 [435] [464]